PEACE

THE

BEST POLICY

OR

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

APPEARANCE of a FOREIGN WAR,

THE

PRESENT STATE of AFFAIRS at HOME

AND THE

COMMISSION for GRANTING PARDONS IN AMERICA.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND

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THE SECOND EDITION.
CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:
PRINTED for J. ALMON, PICCADILLY.
MDCCLXXVII.

US 2970.16.2
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Cook Bequest
22 Dec. 1883

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THE

BEST POLICY, &c.

SIR,

I HAVE received the favour of your letter, in which you ſet forth our American victories and advantages; that after a continued ſeries of ſucceſs on our ſide news is arrived of the Provincial army being fled backward into the highlands, of Fort Waſhington being taken by ſurrender and Fort Lee without reſiſtance nor can any one ſay what further accounts may yet come before the concluſion of the campaign: whereupon you aſk me what I know think of the conteſt between Great Britain and her Colonies. I don't know how far theſe diſtant triumphs will allow us leiſure to look into our affairs nearer home; but I preſume it to be meant, that I ſhould freely anſwer what you ſo emphatically enquire. I am then ſorry to ſay, that notwithſtanding the facts mentioned by you I ſee no reaſon for any change in my opinion from what it was at the firſt outſet of theſe proceedings; but on the contrary that time is evidently and daily bringing forward the events, which were from the beginning to be expected. Evils before on the anvil only forging and hammering are at preſent abroad.

Fleets and armies were then preparing and ſending, dangerous plans were projecting and executing, adminiſtration threatened and prudent perſons were alarmed; but a civil war now rages in full force, our provinces are driven into a declaration of independence, ruin is coming upon us as an armed man and I hardly know, whether it is permitted to add, that our miniſters move to our deſtruction, like giants refreſhed with wine. The more powerful armaments that we employ and the more miſchief we make, the further that we advance or the deeper we engage in this unhappy buſineſs; ſo much the wider will be the breach between us and our colonies, ſo much the more grievous the wounds given and received on each ſide and the ſurer in the end our own undoing; whether this ſhall happen by the means of defeat or of victory. What are all our boaſts, our addreſſes and exultations on this occaſion any wiſer or better; than if a man frantic with rage and having himſelf in his fury cut and ſlaſhed his limbs was to lift up the dagger dropping with his own blood and ſhould cry, have not I been performing a brave action?

Theſe things however are become a trite topic, a reader or a writer cannot but be tired with their repetition; although we ſeem otherwiſe no more ſenſible of them, than the man borne upon a bier is of his own knell. I ſhould therefore not have now troubled you on the ſubject; but that we are on this our ill-fated journey arrived at one further ſtage, where we have important reaſons at leaſt well to conſider in what manner and by which road we will proceed; if we are immoveably reſolved not to ſtay our ſteps and to return.

A French war was always to be looked for at the ſeaſon choſen by that nation and if it ſhould be neceſſary for the continuing aſunder us and our colonies; but now it plainly appears in full ſight before us. Portugal and Spain have already been at blows in South America: Great

Britain

Britain and France are arming and preparing: aſſiſtance to the Portugueſe is certain war with the French and the Spaniards or this event may come upon us of itſelf; in either of which caſes a junction of our colonies againſt us with thoſe two powers will bid fair to wind up the whole of this fatal cataſtrophe, that the courſe of our counſels has for a long time been gradually bringing about. A conſiderable body of our ſailors and the greateſt part of the frigates and ſmall veſſels of our fleet are at a diſtance occupied in an employment very different from the protection of ourſelves. The Americans with the money of Spain and the ſhips of France or of any other foreigners might perhaps out-number us even in our own ſeamen. What a conjuncture would it be for England, if our enemies ſhould command and their fleets ride triumphant in the channel? Our army is ſent on the ſame wiſe errand with our navy. There are ſaid to have been left in the two iſlands of Great Britain and Ireland hardly ſeven thouſand effective men each. Our ſafety muſt be confided to the name of a militia chiefly compoſed of perſons forced againſt their inclinations into the ſervice for the eaſe and the defence of the Rich and the Great; who themſelves hardly touch that burthen with one of their fingers. Who knows, how long it may be; before the fate of this kingdom or even of its crown will under ſuch circumſtances depend on the very doubtful event of a battle or two fought at our own homes for our All? The Norman conqueſt was decided by a ſingle one. War has hitherto been only a ſport to us in compariſon; but now *Non levia aut ludicra*—it will in this caſe not be about a few broken heads on the continent or at a diſtance: our own country will be the ſcene of action and at ſtake on the caſt. Great Britain is in one reſpect utterly unlike the reſt of Europe; which is almoſt throughout cut and carved into fortifications; whereas there is from one end to the other of our iſland not a place, that can for a day or an hour with-

ſtand a proper train of battering artillery. Whoever with us is maſter of the field; is ſo likewiſe of every city, every town, every houſe and habitation of our country. We have no barrier for defence, no forts for delay. All muſt be at the mercy of a victorious commander; who has only to march and to take poſſeſſion. Our armies themſelves have no walls under the cannon of which on occaſion to retreat nor any ſafety, but in victory. What could preſerve the perſon of our Prince or his royal and numerous offspring from captivity or our prodigious and at preſent opulent Capital from plunder after one or at moſt two defeats in the field of battle? What Engliſhman could in ſuch an exigency find where to ſhelter himſelf, his family or whatſoever ſhould be moſt precious and moſt valuable to him? This ſequeſtered and unmoleſted iſland is, as it were a maiden territory: no foreign enemy has on this happy ſpot (happy if our own governors would not involve us in misfortunes) ſet his foot by force ſince the Norman invaſion; for Lewis the Dauphin was called hither by our barons of that time againſt king John and rather brought benefit, than otherwiſe to the public. This nation has often done much miſchief to our neighbours of France at their own homes; but we have hitherto never received any from them in return at ours. We have abroad the reputation of endleſs riches. Our funds are a circumſtance unexampled and unknown in the world before. The ſoldier or the plunderer may come hither, hungry and eager for his prey; when we ſhall have only bankruptcy and miſery with which to diſcharge the demands made upon us. I will however not endeavour nor am capable to deſcribe ſuch a ſcene: pray heaven, that we may never ſee it repreſented before our eyes!

We have more domeſtic circumſtances not mentioned, that may be found very untoward in ſuch a conteſt; but which it might go too near the quick to touch upon: I

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ſhall leave them for the thoughts of others. I have likewiſe confined myſelf at home. Not a word has been ſaid concerning our Eaſt Indian ſettlements or our Weſt Indian iſlands (to fling our African territories out of the queſtion, as trifles unworthy of notice) nor concerning the danger of any of them either from France or Spain or both or in the caſe ſuppoſed even from our own North American colonies; for however prodigiouſly important theſe poſſeſſions may be to us, they are nevertheleſs no more than a feather in the balance compared with what may happen on our own ground of Great Britain.

What ſhall we then do in this critical caſe or how are we to ſteer our courſe? My anſwer in the firſt place is undoubtedly to let the Portugueſe and the Spaniards decide their diſpute between themſelves and for us not to meddle in it with our arms. A rage for war has been the ruling paſſion of our government ever ſince the Revolution. It is what has brought us to our preſent deplorable condition; we ſeem nevertheleſs neither ſatisfied with our follies nor reſtored to our underſtandings. Three ſummers only are paſt, ſince in ſpite of our immenſe debts and every conſideration of prudence we were upon the point of taking part in the war between the Turks and the Ruſſians; as if no ſquabble was to happen in any part of the globe without our having a hand in it. We happily eſcaped then; but now in ten times a worſe conjuncture we are again urged about the Portugueſe and the Spaniards.

Portugal has ever ſince the preſent conteſt between us and our colonies been open to the Provincials, like the reſt of Europe; until of very late: no place was perhaps more particularly the ſeat of their correſpondence, than Liſbon. Oſtenſible edicts were publiſhed there as in other parts; but no more obeyed or executed. This court however quarrelling with that of Madrid, ſeizing its claims, diſcomfiting its ſhips and troops and fearing a

revenge and a return for theſe things thought it time to look out for aſſiſtance on its own ſide; in caſe that matters ſhould become more ſerious between them. The ſubject of our madneſs is but too public and too well known to all the world: no great depth of policy was required in the miniſter of Portugal to ſtrike that ſtring. He ſuddenly drove all the American veſſels out of Liſbon and the other ports of his maſter and forbad in good earneſt their entrance thither again. He intends that this forced and late civility (thus forced upon him in effect by the Spaniards) ſhould be repaid by us in the true ſterling coin of Britiſh fleets and armies. It is however to be hoped, that our Engliſh Pombals will not be ſo duped by the Portugueſe; but that they will teſtify the ſame care and concern for the ſafety of their country, as he does for the defence of his.

But will not France interfere and take the part of Spain againſt Portugal; even if we ſhould ourſelves not be firſt to begin? I anſwer, ſo then let it; when we ſhall have the better leiſure and be the more free to purſue our preſent, favourite folly. Have we at this ſeaſon not carved out work enough for ourſelves in our own concerns without ſeeking for more of the ſame ſort in thoſe of others? Happily and fully buſied in our provinces, as we are; is this a time to take upon us the affairs of Portugal? Is our own race ſo eaſily run, that we have need to bear another nation on our back? If it is a point with us to proceed in perpetual oppoſition to the French; if we muſt be ſure to do one thing, becauſe they do another; let us continue at peace when they go to war: that will in my poor opinion be the beſt and the wiſeſt contradiction in our counſels to theirs. Great Britain has no doubt many and noble advantages, eſpecially all the parts of our dominion conſidered or what were ſo; until we wantonly caſt away North America; we have nevertheleſs undone ourſelves with debt, by making

making or partaking of miſchief; a fate therefore well deſerved by us and a due effect of the admirable order of things; which by a natural courſe conſtantly tends to the common good reſtraining the conduct and abating the power of thoſe, who counteract that great end. France is alſo a very fine region, one of the prime parts of Europe or of our globe. They have by wars and by broils however encumbered in the ſame manner their government the moſt of any in the world next to ours. The only difference between us beſides the great magnitude of our debt above theirs ſeems to be; that they have done this through a vain ambition of advancing their nation and their monarch: whereas we have moſt meanly ſacrificed our lives, our ſubſtance, our ſtate and ourſelves for the pleaſure or the intereſts of ſtrangers. If we now again engage in blood on an occaſion foreign to us; this will be a further offence againſt the welfare of the world, which will likewiſe not fail to find a proper retribution. Our conduct, our ingratitude, injuſtice and cruelty towards the Americans, are fully ſufficient to ſink us into an abyſs; like a milliſtone about our necks: let us then not add another weight to this, which already is of itſelf but too big for us to bear. A threadbare proverb ſays; that bought experience is the beſt: we have full dearly paid for ours. Let then our neighbours and rivals proceed in their own and their old way, if they pleaſe; but let us late at leaſt profit by the double experience of ourſelves and of them and would to God, that we had prudently done it ſooner in the day inſtead of finding ourſelves under a downright neceſſity to do it now!

But will not Ruſſia aſſiſt us againſt France? I anſwer that country to be at a great diſtance; to have itſelf the wounds of a late war to heal; to want at home perhaps no other means or meaſure than peace for the multiplication of its own people throughout an almoſt immenſe, but

empty empire. I will nevertheleſs not pretend to gueſs at the counſels of the Ruſſian cabinet; but neither have all the branches of the houſe of Bourbon nor Sweden nor Genoa been taken into the contrary account nor has any thing been ſaid concerning the Court of Vienna nor of any other powers allied or wiſhing well to France or to Spain. So much however is ſure; that any nation will ever find foreign help or dependance very precarious; when it ſhall itſelf be weak enough to neglect or to act againſt its own intereſt.

Is not however this meaſure proper for preſerving the trade of Portugal? In return to which give me leave in the firſt place to repeat that moſt emphatical, but juſt queſtion of an infallible authority; what can it profit any one to gain the whole world, if he loſe his own ſoul? Our riſque and our ſtake are in the preſent caſe too big. The trade to Oporto and to Liſbon will not be at all more endangered by our keeping out of this conteſt; than the very ſafety of Great Britain itſelf will by our becoming parties in it. The time and the conjuncture are exceedingly againſt us. A nation can ill think of defending others; which is deſtroying itſelf. This is my ſpecial and particular anſwer on the ſubject, but peace beſides is in general the buſineſs of a mercantile people: new ſources of commerce will then open and offer themſelves, as any old ones may happen to periſh or to be loſt. The beſt harveſt of ſuch ſtates often is, when others are employed in fighting about they know not what. The Dutch can well witneſs to the truth of this on the laſt occaſion of the kind and they will in all appearance be able further to confirm it on the preſent. Our national debt was begun in the war following the Revolution: happy for this nation, if the firſt author of ſo fatal a meaſure had never been born! It has been regularly and conſiderably increaſed in every ſucceſſive war ſince; but which of all thoſe many parts has ever been repaid to us

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by any trade that was gained or retained by the means of it? If ſuch a one is to be found; why has it not enabled us to diſcharge itſelf or to what æra is that event reſerved? No one now has ſo much as a conception of war without borrowing. We ſet out this firſt year for a gentle beginning with five additional duties*; but if we proceed thus adding debt to debt, funds to funds and taxes to taxes; how long for the love of heaven can poſſibly be left us not only any trade, but even any property itſelf? If we never were at war: would no nation purchaſe our merchandiſe, when we had what they wanted and we underſold others? Commerce is the offspring of peace and war is her irreconcileable enemy; but a man might write a whole book on this ſubject and every word of it be reaſonable.

How then do we ſtand about treaties? This may prove a long and a perplexed narrative: I will however endeavour to relate, if you ſhall have the patience to read it. It need not be ſaid, how much good part of Europe was on the death of Charles the Second of Spain agitated concerning the ſucceſſion of that monarchy. Portugal was greatly and the States General were conſiderably intereſted on the occaſion. The Engliſh ſecure in their own iſland were leaſt concerned in the caſe and might have made their market and their profit of almoſt the whole world; if the people then at our helm had ſo pleaſed: the Britiſh politics have however ſince the Revolution never been of ſuch a kind. The intereſts of our neighbours at that time prevailed over our own. In the year ſeventeen hundred and three we entered into a defenſive and offenſive alliance with the Emperor, the States General and Portugal; wherein all four firſt agreed to prevent any prince of French extraction from becoming king of Spain and then the other three made

* On the land, cards, dice, coaches and ſtamps.

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magnificent aſſurances to the king of Portugal concerning his claims and poſſeſſions and that expreſsly notwithſtanding any treaties then ſubſiſting between Portugal and Spain. Every thing of this was perfectly and eaſily practicable; if the contracting powers had appointed their own prince, as they then intended to have done; but *Dis aliter viſum*—Fate and fortune determined differently from them. The French family took poſſeſſion of the Spaniſh throne; which they have ever ſince kept. The foundation therefore failing the ſuperſtructure of courſe fell with it. As the great circumſtance and the groundwork of all did not take place, the parties could not be obliged nor had in their power to make good the other ſecondary conditions. We their ſucceſſors ſtand in the place of our reſpective anceſtors. It might on demand made be duly anſwered by us, ſomething like what fable relates to have by its own father Æſop been once done; when he ſaid to certain perſons: do you firſt ſtop up the rivers and my maſter will then drink dry the ſea. We were in the alliance only one of four; but let the king of Portugal begin with turning out the king of Spain and we may well undertake to complete the remainder of the contract. This treaty from the very firſt therefore ſoon became no better than waſte paper: the aſſurance or guaranty contained in it has nevertheleſs been brought forward and urged on the preſent occaſion. That circumſtance made it the more neceſſary to take ſome notice on the ſubject; but ſo far we may ſafely conclude, that we are evidently and perfectly free from all obligation whatſoever.

At the ſame time however and dated on the ſame day Great Britain and the States General contracted likewiſe another, a defenſive alliance with the king of Portugal; by which beſides both making war with all their force againſt the enemy they ſtipulated to aſſiſt him with a particular number of ſhips or of troops in conjunction:

if

if France or Spain attacked his dominions at home or abroad. In return his Portugueſe majeſty likewiſe engaged to make war againſt the enemy with all his force; if France or Spain ſhould attack the kingdom of Great Britain or the ſtates of the United Provinces. This treaty is expreſsly declared to be perpetual: it was however entered into on the ſame occaſion with the other and was deſigned to preſerve the reſpective parties from the dangerous union of the two great Powers before ſpoken of; but it was in all appearance never meant, that either Great Britain or the United Provinces ſhould riſque their very exiſtence about inſignificant palavers in the neighbourhood of St. Sacrament or concerning national limits at the lower end of the river Plate; which had time out of mind been a conſtant bone of contention between Spain and Portugal and long enough before the alliance now conſidering was contracted or conceived. Great Britain has ſince had war with both France and Spain at once and likewiſe with one of them only; when Portugal notwithſtanding any ſuch treaty declared none againſt either. Is one ally to be obliged and the other to be looſe or are we the only people in the world, whoſe duty and whoſe doom it is to meddle in every idle difference under the ſun? What complaints for a great number of years have our Portugal merchants been perpetually making concerning this court and its miniſter and their neglect and breach of treaties? They will therefore no doubt be very far from now deſiring us to become the dupes or to be offered, as victims on the altar of thoſe ſame perſons. We had from the firſt originally no engagement except in conjunction with the Dutch; but the fleet and the land forces ſpecified were to have been furniſhed by us in common. Are we on this occaſion then to act alone; while that prudent people ſtand by laughing in their ſleeves and making their advantage of our broils, our miſchiefs and but too probably of our final overthrow?

throw? This nevertheleſs is the only treaty of the ſort between Great Britain and Portugal; for commercial agreements are of another kind and are not mixed with articles of this nature. It has never been confirmed ſince; but is that on which his moſt Faithful majeſty and his miniſter muſt require us to become parties in this their quarrel with Spain.

Although however there is no guaranty of the Portugueſe dominions by Great Britain (for beyond doubt the parts of the offenſive treaty before cited fell with the whole) although there never was a promiſe of any ſpecific number of troops or of ſhips to be furniſhed by us ſeparately to Portugal; yet both theſe points have in the ſtrongeſt manner taken place with reſpect to Spain. There is a treaty of ſeventeen hundred and twenty-nine and therefore later than the other; in which *we guarantee all its kingdoms, ſtates and dominions in what parts of the world ſoever ſituate together with their rights and privileges of commerce and in which we engage ſeparately to furniſh his Catholic majeſty with eight thouſand troops and four thouſand horſe or ſhips of war or tranſports or money at his option*; "*if he ſhall be attacked or moleſted by any power or under any pretext whatſoever*;" words which no expreſſions of the defenſive treaty with Portugal can look in the face. I lay however no ſtreſs on theſe ſtipulations. We ſhall perhaps be told that this treaty is indeed not repealed, ſuch not being the practice with reſpect to treaties; but that it is antiquate, like acts of parliament in Scotland. I ſpeak no word to the contrary: I only deſire it to be conſidered how like that is to ſaying, that princes keep or neglect contracts of this kind, as they pleaſe. I give up this argument nor have I any mind to put the vivacity of our miniſters upon arming in defence of the poor, injured Spaniards.

All this however is nothing, it is ſunſhine and the broad way compared to the perplexity reſpecting the right itſelf.

itſelf. The north, the left hand of the river Plate according to its courſe downwards (ſay ſome) belongs to the Portugueſe. A notable point indeed for Great Britain to be undone upon; which has in all appearance been diſputed ever ſince the firſt habitation of thoſe regions by Europeans or at leaſt ſo far backward, as that no man can trace it to the beginning! How long time are we to take for the trial of this title? What can in its own nature be more uncertain, than the claims to newly diſcovered countries; where a full ſettlement has not preſerved an undiſturbed poſſeſſion? I ſhall not pretend to tell the long and tedious tale of this diſpute: I cannot however help obſerving; that there lies now before me accidentally taken down in my ſtudy a map printed and publiſhed about forty years ago by an honeſt Engliſhman. Any one may be bound; that neither the author nor the engraver of it was bribed either by Portugal or by Spain. They certainly copied from other more ancient charts; but I am ſure, that this propoſition is there plainly contradicted. So let the matter remain for me. The reader is no doubt heartily tired; but he is hardly more ſo than the writer is out of patience to ſee the very fate and ſafety of our country made to depend upon ſuch trifling ſtuff and contemptible conſiderations. Here then I intrench myſelf; that whenever any perſons and eſpecially princes or miniſters quit the ground of the publick good; they ought to be very ſure, that they have got better to go upon.

This whole conſideration plainly proves the utter abſurdity of our iſland entering into defenſive or offenſive alliances with the countries on the continent. I deſire to offer therefore ſome obſervations on that ſubject and about treaties in general; which are ſo perpetually interpreted according to the inclinations of princes, that they are little or no better than the law books of the Judge; who, whenever he found in his reading a diſputable point, is ſaid to

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have wrote over againſt it a caſe for a friend. What blood and money of this impoſed upon and almoſt betrayed nation were during the war before the laſt laviſhed in the ſervice and on account of the Queen of Hungary? That was then the reigning madneſs. With what contempt nevertheleſs did the court of Vienna receive our requeſt of aſſiſtance in return againſt France at the beginning of the laſt war. What are all your American ſquabbles to us; was truly and juſtly enough, whether or no very gratefully anſwered. It is often ſaid abroad; that our generous ſubſidy of near ſeven hundred thouſand pounds a year preſerved the King of Pruſſia in his greateſt exigencies. He is now eſtabliſhed in peace; but I believe it would be very difficult to perſuade that politic prince to riſque again his ſecurity and his crown at our call. It is the ambition and the intrigues of courts which commonly embarraſs the ſubjects of them with contracts of this kind. Can then a few place-men have the power ſo to devote a whole people; that notwithſtanding any exception of their own neceſſity (an excuſe acknowledged in all caſes) notwithſtanding the objection of an immediate precipice lying before them, they ſhall abſolutely be bound to proceed and directly to leap into the gulph at the will or the whiſtle of ſtrangers and foreigners? Be it ſo and that human happineſs and the welfare and the ſafety of millions are of no more conſideration. The conſtitution of England puts this power in the king, the king lodges it with his miniſter and *Quicquid delirant reges*—Whatever princes or their miniſters pleaſe to do, the people muſt abide the brunt of; whether or no they have themſelves any conſent or concurrence in the act. I ſubmit, I do not preſume to diſpute this point; but a prince of Barbary is ſaid to have laugh'd at a French king for having ſpent in fitting out a fleet to bombard his city ten times the money, that he would himſelf any day have taken to have burnt it to the ground. I wonder what is the whole value of

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the particular and immediate object of the preſent ſquabble between Spain and Portugal. I will not now examine; whether ſome Engliſhmen would be very fond of changing for it their own real eſtates; might we in ſome manner however not imitate the politics of Poltis an ancient king of Thrace, who being deſired to take part in the Trojan war declined it; but that he himſelf and the reſt of the world might peaceably ſleep in their beds and neither Menelaus nor Paris be forced to fight for the want of a wife, offered to ſend each of them one out of his own number; of which he had plenty. What immenſe regions have we in the waſtes and wilds of America of certainly full as little uſe to us; as the meaneſt among the wives of honeſt Poltis was to him? Could not we then outdo the generoſity of the Thracian prince and accommodate both the combatants with a handſomer and a better poſſeſſion, than the ſubject of all this buſtle and that exceedingly more to our own convenience and advantage, than the undoing ourſelves in the contention between them? It is moſt devoutly to be wiſhed, that governments would take pattern by the prudence of individuals, when they are ſeconds in a quarrel; that inſtead of increaſing the common miſchief and havock by their own engaging in it they would only ſtand by to ſee fair play and put an end to the diſpute; when the two parties had ſufficiently played the fool on each ſide. All treaties however are undoubtedly to be interpreted within the bounds of right: no man or miniſter or nation can make an agreement to maintain another in wrong. Every ſtate therefore requiring any other to ſacrifice itſelf in its quarrel is at leaſt highly accountable for the juſtice of its cauſe in the beginning and the rectitude of its conduct in the progreſs and (I ſhould think too) that the importance of the object in conteſt was in ſome degree adequate to the ſacrifice ſo demanded of another. We are in all appearance then diſtant enough from the particular danger alluded to; if our fleets and our armies ſhall but

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be kept back, until Portugal has fairly and clearly proved theſe points to be on its ſide in the preſent diſpute. What a hiſtory will be told to our poſterity of the laſt period of their anceſtors, as a proſperous or an independent people; if the beginning of it ſhall conſiſt in the wiſdom of this American war and its concluding cataſtrophe be a Spaniſh and a Portugueſe broil about the bounds of Buenos Aires and the Braſils? Our country however is famous for freedom and for a ſhare in the government of itſelf: Heaven therefore forbid that we ſhould have the hard fate firſt to be involved in inextricable difficulties by the injuſtice and the inconſiderateneſs of our own adminiſtration and then in the very act of ſtruggling under that circumſtance to receive our deaths wound through the unreaſonableneſs and the obſtinacy of the miniſter of a foreign prince!

I have for ſome time imagined you ſtanding near me and ready to aſk; what will then your old friends of America ſay to theſe peaceable politics; who under their preſent extreme diſtreſs cannot but wiſh for a French war or any means, which may employ and weaken their enemy or will they be more acceptable to your brother patriots; who are often charged with approving or diſapproving of no meaſures, but as they may ſerve to oppoſe and to embarraſs the adminiſtration? As to the Americans; I heartily commiſerate their caſe. You know, whether I have ſcrupled to declare my opinion concerning the juſtice of their cauſe and the right of their ſelf-defence. The writer ſincerely wiſhes them ſafety, proſperity and in good time greatneſs even to a degree hitherto unknown in the hiſtory of mankind: he wiſhes however theſe things by other means than the inſtant and the utter deſtruction of England; if the weak, but faithful efforts of an inſignificant individual can at all contribute to prevent or to delay the fate of his country. He is perfectly ſenſible of what very little hopes there are on that head; but

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no man need much to excuſe himſelf for throwing away his breath or his time in the purſuit of ſuch a purpoſe nor does the clamour for the good of the public ſeem at preſent ſo loud or ſo violent, but that even a feeble voice may at leaſt make itſelf to be heard on the ſubject; although any further attention or effect muſt be left to the wiſdom and the policy of our ſuperiors.

With reſpect to my brethren in patriotiſm; the writer profeſſes to know no friendſhip, no familiarity, no union, no connection which is to take place of or to interfere with that firſt and greateſt of obligations, the duty of every man to his country: they muſt all melt and diſſolve away in the preſence of that bright and powerful object. Many of our ſubordinate ties are beyond doubt moſt deſervedly dear to us; but then they have a different ſphere of their own and are contracted or ariſe on other ground: party however degenerates into downright faction and combination againſt the public; when it is made or permitted to claſh with the common and general advantage of the whole. A great traveller tells us; that one of the moſt remarkable among the wonders of nature is the vaſt variety of the human viſage: our minds within are however formed in as different moulds; as our outward figure. The writer does not nor has had an opportunity to know the thoughts of almoſt any other perſon on this head of our avoiding or engaging in a Portugueſe war. The oſtenſible or pretended opinions of men ſpeaking for pay or in hopes of it are of leſs account, than the whiſtling of the wind; but he deſires the indulgence of any honeſt man, whoſe ſentiments may on that ſubject be other than his own. The conceptions of each perſon are given to him for his guide: the writer declares his own on the common claim of every one concerned in the event: he can only expoſe the reaſons of his opinion: it is upon them that the right and the wrong muſt be de-

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termined and the good of the public is the true and the great touchſtone, by which they are to be tried.

A good deal of what has been ſaid is likewiſe applicable to the introduction of Ruſſians upon the continent of America or to any other means of forwarding a French war and ſome important parts of it moreover go in general, againſt at all riſquing ſuch a conteſt in the conjuncture now obtaining; if it can by foreſight or prudence be any way avoided. Here then comes on our ſecond point and a moſt eſſential queſtion it is; I mean, whether France induced by the occaſion will at its own hour and of its own choice ſooner or later not probably begin or ſeek hoſtilities with us, either for the aſſiſting and confirming the ſeparation between us and our former provinces or in hopes under our preſent diſadvantage of making ſome impreſſions on ourſelves nearer home. I ſay in the firſt place then; let us at leaſt by no additional act of our own haſten that circumſtance. There are always chance and time; until events have irrevocably taken place. It is but too poſſible; that we may with our own hands do ourſelves ſo much miſchief, as fully to ſatisfy both the revenge and the intereſt of our rivals; although their interfering would undoubtedly render this very bad matter much worſe on our part. Almoſt the only point left us even to pray heaven for ſeems to be, that we may without the intervening of any other nation ſettle among ourſelves all our preſent moſt unhappy domeſtic concerns; in the hopes (however ſlender) that our ſtate after its confuſion and diſtraction, its deficiency and bankruptcy (if ſuch ſhall happen) after being (as it were) purged by fire may according to the fable of the Phœnix ariſe again out of its own aſhes and that theſe alſo may not for the completion of our misfortunes be ſcattered abroad by the hands of a foreign enemy. So much with reſpect to provoking this miſchief; I have however a further anſwer.

It

It is related, that Alexander the Great finding himſelf not able to untie the famous Gordian knot made ſhort work by drawing his ſword and cutting it aſunder. The knot in queſtion muſt not be cut with the ſword: there are but two many ſwords drawn on the ſubject already: it muſt be ſolved by peace. Why do we not ourſelves make peace with our colonies; why do we by that means not come between them and the French; while there is yet an opportunity or poſſibility of doing it? That meaſure will take out the ſting of France: ſhe will then neither be ſo inclined to attack us nor ſo dangerous an enemy; if ſhe does. This is the plain, the open, the ready road: while every other way is impeded by armies, by enemies, by dangers and difficulties not to be overcome. What more than common infatuation or phrenzy can then divert us from it?

This is alſo the fit ſeaſon for the purpoſe: when we are in a courſe of ſucceſs, when victory appears to be hovering over our banners. Need we to be put in mind of the chance of war or the changeableneſs of fortune? Have theſe things never been known to us in the ſame country of America? We have with veteran armies, choſen commanders and a prodigious artillery made a ſtrong impreſſion on a people; who are in their very firſt rudiments of war. I know, how difficult in the moment of advantage is the bringing men to a due ſenſe of their own ſtate or that of their adverſaries. I ſhall not therefore dwell on the queſtion; whether the Provincials may not recover themſelves, may not amend their miſtakes, ſtrengthen their weakneſſes, be inſtructed by experience; whether the tide may not turn and ſet againſt us, which now is in our favour nor how fatal even a ſmall miſcarriage may at ſuch a diſtance prove to us; but the point which I muſt preſs and inſiſt upon is; that we ſhould ſee all theſe our victories and advantages in the field only as ſo many ſteps, ſo many approaches, ſo many advances towards a French war;

which plainly appears to lie between us and the conqueſt of our colonies; if we or our rulers can be perſuaded to conſider our ſituation in its proper light.

How often have our anceſtors carried fire and ſword into the heart of France? Have they never ſhaken its government to the very foundation or ſet their own king upon its throne? How did that nation ſuffer by the arms of our fathers no longer ago than in the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth? So lately as in the laſt war of how many noble, external dependencies did we with a ſurpriſing courſe of ſucceſs ſtrip that ſtate, almoſt reducing it to the bounds of its European and Continental territory? This ancient enmity, this perpetual rivalſhip, theſe repeated miſchiefs, all theſe old and new grudges are they in an inſtant then buried and forgotten or when had that people ſo fair and ſo tempting an opportunity of a return and revenge upon us? They may reſt, until we have proceeded beyond a poſſibility of retreat; they may look on to ſee, whether our inſurgent provinces will be able to do the buſineſs without their help; they may for a while give us fair words or act under the cover of individuals; but does or can any one doubt, whether they will openly and avowedly draw the ſword; whenever the ſeaſon and the conjuncture ſhall require it? Do not therefore let us deceive ourſelves; for to that point tend all the triumphant proceedings, of which we are at this time ſo vain and ſo proud. What will then become of our preſent hopes and ſuperiority or does any one believe; that the firſt cannon fired by France will not totally change the whole face of American affairs? Suppoſe, that we ſhould this winter take poſſeſſion of Philadelphia and cut off the ſouthern colonies from the northern: Muſt nevertheleſs our armies there not moulder and our ſtrength wither away; will not the provinces riſe again with ten-fold force againſt us; if we ſhall have the Houſe of Bourbon to combat in every part of the world, while they are ſupported

ported and aſſiſted by the ſame power? This obſervation is not confined to our own colonies. We have called the Canadians to arms; but which way will they turn them, when they ſhall ſee the banners of France diſplayed and waving in the diſpute? This danger on the ſide of our neighbours and rivals is the ſore at our heart; which is rendered worſe, more deſperate and in likelihood (as it were) of immediate mortification by every blow, which we are ſo inconſiderately giving to the provincial part of our country; but which demands a lenient hand and may only be healed by the balm of peace.

It is however reported, that our American miniſter ſays no to this: but that France and Spain will ſo fear or diſlike the example for their own colonies and provinces, as not to deſire or to aid the revolt and the independence of ours; to the ſubduing of which therefore we may with ſafety nevertheleſs proceed. Permit me then to enter more particularly into this ſubject. What does France now poſſeſs in North America? Not an acre of land. What had ſhe ever there? According to her own hiſtorian Charlevoix* more territory than is contained in the continent of Europe. When and how did ſhe loſe it? In the laſt war by the arms of Great Britain, who was on the occaſion very powerfully helped by her own colonies in that part of the globe; but with which ſhe is now in contention. What is in all appearance the ſhorteſt and the ſureſt way for France to get again what was at that time ſo taken from her? Undoubtedly herſelf to unite in her turn for its recovery with thoſe very colonies, by whoſe means and aſſiſtance ſhe was before deprived of it. She has here then nothing to riſk, all to gain and in her choice a moſt likely meaſure for ſucceſs. I think; that there are not many ſyllogiſms in that argument. We however diſpoſſeſſed her in the ſame conteſt of her beſt ſettlements

* See Hiſtoire de la Nouvelle France, p. 1.

in other parts of the world beſides. So far for France; next with reſpect to Spain.

We had at the end of the laſt war taken the Havannah. How many days ſail is it from thence to Vera Cruz? There is only the gulph of Mexico between them. How many days march is it from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico? Suppoſe it to be about two hundred and fifty miles. The naval force of both France and Spain was totally annihilated. Their flags hardly ſhewed their heads in the ſea. They were abſolutely diſabled from ſending aſſiſtance to their diſtant poſſeſſions. Theſe were expoſed to us almoſt as a prey. What under an immediate miracle could have hindered us from being with proper preparations maſters of Mexico the next campaign? Had Lord Chatham remained at the helm; he would have been a bold man, who ſhould have enſured it to the Spaniards for another ſummer. What a blow would there have been; how would it have humbled that proud empire! I am not ſetting forth of what benefit ſuch an acquiſition would have been to us nor ſaying, whether or no mines of gold and of ſilver might to a nation indebted more than one hundred and forty millions ſterling be of as much ſervice, as to another: it muſt however have put into our power a peace on what terms, we had pleaſed; but neither of theſe is the point. Aſk the Spaniards what price their Crown puts on Mexico: that is the queſtion; but with which they might perhaps be more amazed, than they would be ready to return an anſwer to it.

The Havannah, I ſay, was our own: Manilla was the ſame, of which we ſeem never to have known the value. Florida yet remains in our hands. Are then all theſe damages and dangers not remembered for the long ſpace of twelve revolving years or is it credible, that the governments of Madrid and Verſailles ſhould be more afraid of the future and fancied evils to ariſe from our colo-

colonies alone without us; than they are of the preſent power of Great Britain with all theſe ſame colonies in its train and which in part they moſt ſeverely felt and in part moſt narrowly eſcaped, ſo ſhort a time ſince? Are theſe riſing Republics to become ſo prodigiouſly powerful as to ſwallow up not only Canada, Louiſiana, Florida, the Weſt and Eaſt Indian ſettlements of France and Spain (for theſe conqueſts we ourſelves actually made in the laſt war) but likewiſe Peru, Mexico and the Lord knows what more; as eaſily as the ſong ſays, that the dragon of Wantley devoured houſes and churches? Be it ſo: this is indeed a moſt ſincere and genuine compliment to democratical forms of government, which the writer is not a perſon to diſpute; but how many ages of man muſt the moſt ſanguine enthuſiaſt on ſuch a ſubject allow for the performance of all theſe miracles? Muſt not to-day paſs before to-morrow comes and the morrow precede the time after it? Does not every event keep its due order and ſucceſſion in the chain of things? Are the princes or the miniſters of France and of Spain ſo ſtrangely formed in their ſight, as immenſely to magnify objects, which are at a vaſt diſtance from them; but to be ſtark and ſtone blind toward thoſe, which ſtare them in the face or that lie at their feet (as ſtumbling blocks) and over which they have themſelves ſo lately before fallen? What prepoſterous and inconſiſtent conceptions! I truſt then, that I may here well appeal to the public; not only whether the reaſoning concerning the neutral diſpoſition of theſe two monarchies ſuppoſed to ariſe from apprehenſions for their own colonies is not beyond reply anſwered; but moreover whether this circumſtance does not plainly bear the contrary way and muſt not be a ſtrong incitement for thoſe powers to ſupport or to unite themſelves againſt us with our revolted provinces.

Why do we however debate about poſſibilities or probabilities, when we have the fact itſelf before our eyes?

In the Weſt Indies do not the French and the Spaniſh Governors receive into their ports and with a high hand protect the privateers of our colonies? Do our wiſe miniſters themſelves or would they have others to believe; that they do not therein act with the inclinations and according to the intentions of their reſpective Courts? Turn to Europe; are not the Americans equally welcome in the harbours and the dominions of thoſe crowns there? Are they not furniſhed with arms, with ammunition, with every thing wanted by them and without which they could not continue their contention with us? I do not refer to their privateer at Bilboa, their agents at Paris, to our ſhips carried into their ports as prizes or to any other particular circumſtances; for whoever diſputes this point, muſt be ready to deny the ſun to ſhine by day or the ſtars by night. The doubt made on this head however not having been, how far the hands of theſe ſtates will follow their hearts, but about their inclinations themſelves; never ſurely was argument more fully advanced in the face of matter of fact, than that now in queſtion. I will not aſk; whether it were to be wiſhed, that any perſon entertaining ſuch an opinion concerning the intereſts of France was in the counſels of that country, rather than of our own: he might there nevertheleſs contribute to peace, I mean, if he did not in the neighbourhood of Verſailles very ſoon learn another language; but whither can that doctrine at this time tend in England, except towards the encouraging us in going to ſuch lengths and extremities againſt the Americans, as muſt in the end lay us open to the arms or the mercy of our enemies? I hope it to be here obſerved; that the writer is now endeavouring to raiſe ſuch a jealouſy of our neighbours for the purpoſe not of making (which has much too often been the caſe) but of preventing miſchief between us and them. I return then from whence I ſet out on the ſubject before us; that

peace

peace with her own colonies and not a confidence in the intentions or the profeſſions of France is in this preſent conjuncture the proper means of ſecurity for Great Britain.

On what terms however are we to aim at this deſirable object? Is it then the unreaſonableneſs of the propoſition, which makes it neceſſary perpetually to repeat; that the more fair, more equitable, more indulgent the conditions ſhall be towards our colonies, ſo much the better will they likewiſe be for ourſelves. The ſeat of empire draws every thing to itſelf; whether wealth, power or honour. The money brought by the balance of trade or by any other means into Scotland, into Ireland; the riches of our Weſt Indies, the rapine of our Eaſt Indies and even a proportion of tribute from Africa all center in England. North America now not numbered with theſe, was until our own wantonneſs to be reckoned in a high rank among them. Liberty and commerce are the two ſources of riches. The more free therefore the charters and the conſtitutions, the more extenſive the trade and the navigation of our provinces; ſo much the more wealth will flow firſt into theſe ſubordinate ſtates and then from thence into the parent country. The ſeat of government as naturally and as certainly attracts the gold and the ſilver of its dependencies; as the magnet draws its proper metal or the mariner's needle points towards the pole of the earth. Ambition, pleaſure, faſhion, curioſity and many other means complete; whatever trade, taxes and ſalaries leave unperformed. Such is and muſt be the common courſe of things throughout the whole world. Theſe cauſes and effects follow one another; as the ſpark flies upward or the ſtone falls to the ground. Our North American ſettlements were a particular example on this ſubject; for by emitting paper money and making it a legal tender among themſelves; they evidently ſent to the parent ſtate every ſingle ſhilling of their ſurplus.

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There is beſides another moſt material conſideration in the preſent caſe, which is; that it muſt be ſome truly liberal plan and propoſal on the ground here pointed out; if any thing can once more poſſibly reconcile and willingly bring back to their former obedience our diſcontented provinces.

Some men nevertheleſs may at this moment look on it as a ſtrange language to ſay; let us then ſtay our hands, reſtrain our fleets and our armies, repeal our oppreſſive or offenſive acts of parliament, reſtore the charters, extend the trade and uſe every other means within the compaſs of political medicine to heal the wounds of theſe our now hoſtile and exaſperated, but lately moſt faithful and moſt affectionate colonies. I have however put down theſe words upon my paper: they keep their colour: I do not perceive them to turn red, either as written in blood or as bluſhing for ſhame. It would indeed very ill become me to trifle with you and the Public: I ſhall therefore make no ſcruple to add; may heaven in futurity ſo proſper me and mine, as I believe the ſteps here pointed out to be even in this inſtant of victory the true intereſt of Great Britain! Shall I venture one degree further? How many among the authors and the inſtruments of theſe miſeries exult at this ſeaſon in their own ſucceſs? Will it nevertheleſs be an extravagance totally fit for Moor-fields and more ſo than certain meaſures; if any one ſhould make a queſtion, whether ſome of the ſame men may never live to ſee the day, when they ſhall for the ſake of themſelves, if not of their country, much wiſh to have conſidered and to have executed theſe very counſels; which will now perhaps be looked upon by them with a downright contempt.

Theſe things are however written not with hope or expectation, but with regret. There was in the crown of England an Indian jewel of ineſtimable value; but it has

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idly and inconſiderately been caſt away. The period is according to all appearance paſt, in which we ſhall ever ſee North America ſubject to Great Britain. On the one hand the humble plan here recommended is far below the flight of our high-minded miniſters and on the other our colonies have declared their independence. Diſtreſſed, vanquiſhed, driven to flight therefore (as they are) they will nevertheleſs ſeek every reſource afforded by the whole world, will offer themſelves to any ſtate and almoſt on any terms rather than to return again under our dominion. Self-intereſt, fear, rage, revenge, all the ſtrongeſt paſſions implanted in our breaſts, the moſt violent motives of the human frame are throughout America now at work. I had almoſt ſaid; that the earth will open and ſwallow up its offspring, before they ſhall revert to the power of thoſe, from whom they have received ſuch a reward for the firſt benefits perhaps ever conferred by any body and ſucceſſion of men upon another.

What other means then can in ſuch a moſt critical caſe be adopted or purſued by us? I anſwer; that all men muſt take their counſel of the time. Let us therefore not conſume ourſelves in vainly endeavouring to reduce by force thoſe; whom our own conduct has driven from our dominion. It cannot be too often inculcated both on account of its importance and of our being on the very brink of danger; but it is there that France waits for us, as a tyger watches for his prey. It is a hard word to bring out and there is perhaps no one perſon in all Britain or even in America more ſenſible of the very many and very great advantages formerly received or the yet more and much greater to have in future been expected from our colonies ſpread over that almoſt immenſe weſtern continent; than the writer: he is nevertheleſs forced to ſay; let us on the terms of an amicable ſeparation make with them the moſt advantageous peace, that we ſhall be able; if we are determined to hold ſo high

high our conditions, as to forbid all future union or if things have already ſo far proceeded, as that no ſuch return unhappily can again taken place between us. Thus however ſhall we inſtead of having a war with France and with Spain and with our Colonies all united together againſt us have none with any of them; at leaſt unleſs we pleaſe and unleſs being in ſome manner got out of the preſent ſcrape our rulers ſhall wilfully and purpoſely run us into another.

It would in ſuch a caſe become neceſſary for us carefully to conſider all the parts of our government, our revenue, our expences, our commerce and every other article and to contract ourſelves within our new compaſs. This is a very wide theme: I will not now enter into it: our men of genius at the helm however need not to hunt after a war for the trial or the exerciſe of their talents; any one may be bound, that they will on the occaſion here mentioned find full employment for all their wiſdom. How little did the writer but a very few years ago believe, that he ſhould ever have lived to offer ſuch advice. Sure I am; that my heart moſt heavily dictates it and that my hand moſt unwillingly obeys. I will not ſay; may the whole loſs be upon thoſe, that ſhall have occaſioned it; ſince who can anſwer or atone for one part in a million of ſuch a miſchief? I truſt however, that it will be very far from lying upon one, who only counſels us not to do worſe; but to obey the irreſiſtible neceſſity of our caſe after having in vain uſed his utmoſt endeavours to prevent our being brought into it.

Muſt I or no then ſay farewel America? If however fate has ſo reſolved; if it is no longer given for Great Britain to proſper by your means; I was about to pray for bleſſings on your own head; but that might border on preſumption: I ſhall in ſuch a caſe therefore confine myſelf to wiſh, that you may merit them; when I have no doubt, but they will follow nor is it fit, that they

ſhould

ſhould otherwiſe be thrown away upon you. May you merit them by your freedom, your juſtice, your mercy; by a contempt of money, of power, of titles and of every kind of corruption; I ſay, may you deſerve them by not burthening with heavy taxes yourſelves or your ſubjects, by not meddling in miſchiefs foreign to you and above all by bearing a gentle hand over your dependencies! The author cannot flatter himſelf, that his words will live; until you ſhall be beyond your difficulties and placed in a ſtate of proſperity: the things themſelves nevertheleſs are written in adamant and will be a law not only for you, but for ages and perhaps for worlds time without end to come after you. May you however beſides perpetually remember the former friendſhip borne by you to your parent country and may we ourſelves at length become wiſer, although by the ſevere experience of our follies and misfortunes!

This meaſure notwithſtanding is far preferable to an attempt of conquering our colonies not only on account both of the difficulties in the way and of the danger from France and Spain ſo often repreſented, but likewiſe becauſe they would in ſuch a caſe be nothing worth to us; even if it could be compaſſed without pains; if their fortifications would crumble into pieces at the ſound of our trumpets or their armies ſhould on a morning be found dead in their camps; as it is delivered down to have happened with ſome others in former times. If they are reduced by arms, they muſt be ſo ruled: that conſequence is clear and certain. How then ſhall we find and furniſh a force numerous or ſtrong enough for that end? Where are the recruits to be raiſed? We want men at home; of which it will demand a conſiderable body and conſumption. It cannot be intended to enſlave America by its own countrymen: ſuch a means will ill anſwer, they do not ſeem in the leaſt to be of that humour. No; but

we

we have cut their throats and ſo will we likewiſe govern them by foreigners. Even our own Machiavels however certainly do not mean to put that great continent under a ſtronger power of others, than we have there of our own. Suppoſe, that ſtrange troops might perhaps ſerve towards over-awing the natives; how ſhould however we ourſelves in that caſe controul thoſe ſtrangers? Would not they in good meaſure be our maſters, as well as theirs? We muſt keep on the ſpot a force ſufficient to command both; but from whence would the ſoldiery neceſſary for that purpoſe be ſupplied? What is then to be done for the money? Leave our miniſters and their ways-and-means men to find that. America would on the new eſtabliſhment no doubt be expected to pay its own charges and to buy its own chains: we would fund it, as we have done England. This may ſhine in the eyes of ſome perſons, who fancy themſelves to perceive their own profit or plunder in ſuch a ſcheme; but would not theſe noble arrangements intercept and conſume all the benefit or ſurplus, which ſhould come hither home to us? Would it not be lucky; if we did not boot to it ſomething of our own into the bargain? What ſhould we for provinces kept by ſuch difficult and expenſive means then be any better; than if we were to part and to continue in peace and in friendſhip with each other? A further miſchief however is yet behind. How long would theſe things laſt? The firſt French war (and we are rarely or never very long without one) they would cry liberty, would fling off their fetters and join our enemies with far more rancour and reſentment, than ever they bore us before. How would in an inſtant then all this fine enchantment be diſſolved and vaniſh! Let us then open wide our arms to our countrymen of America; if they will return under our government: let us at all events however make peace with them on the beſt conditions in our power: this is the way of our ſafety; but the idea of

conqueſt

conqueſt as it is in itſelf moſt deteſtable; ſo is it in every light likewiſe abſolutely abſurd and deſtructive for us.

One gentleman however here paves the way before us. It is the moral of his ſtory and the burthen of his ſong, that North America never was of any value or advantage to Great Britain and he tells us, that converts are every day making to the propoſal of ſeparating them from one another *. No doubt our miniſters are great men at making converts. They have in leſs than three years converted thirteen provinces of moſt dutiful ſubjects into as many independent republics, thirteen colonies of moſt faithful and affectionate friends into declared and determined enemies; they have converted the opinions of perſons the moſt deſirous to maintain the union between Great Britain and North America into inclinations to ſeparate the one from the other, leſt they ſhould both be totally undone together by a moſt ill-judged and deſtructive civil war between them. What wonderful converſions in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time! What are all thoſe of St. Xavier himſelf that famous modern maker of converts in the Roman legends, when compared with theſe? He did indeed his wonders in the Eaſt Indies; whereas our converters have choſen North America for the ſcene of their miracles. Having however had ſuch extraordinary ſucceſs there, it is poſſible enough; that they may before long be tempted to purſue the ſteps of Xavier towards the riſing ſun; in which caſe any one may to their miraculous powers oppoſe (I will not ſay) a more ſure word of prophecy, but a well grounded argument of experience; that they will loſe our eaſtern, as they moſt probably have already done our weſtern empire. I don't however know whether the gentleman here hinted at may not mean to claim to himſelf our domeſtic converſions, as

* See Series of Anſwers p. 9.

the

the effects of his own rhetoric. I muſt in that caſe confeſs myſelf to think; that he wrongs our miniſters of their right: I will nevertheleſs meddle no farther in the matter, being unwilling to diſturb the happineſs of any one ariſing from ſo natural a ſource, as the importance of a man to himſelf. I do for my own part acknowledge nothing, but the laſt neceſſity and the extreme danger of my country to have extorted from me ſuch a propoſition.

Is not however the adminiſtration itſelf now negociating and may we not any day expect to hear news of an accommodation by mutual conceſſions on both ſides and by the parties meeting on the middle ground; as it is commonly done on ſuch occaſions? Is not there a commiſſion gone to America for that end? In anſwer to theſe queſtions I deſire liberty fully and freely to explain myſelf on the ſubjects. I ſay then, that from the beginning of theſe moſt unhappy broils to the preſent moment our miniſters conſtantly appear to have made no other or leſſer demands, than in the outſet abſolute power over our colonies and ſince the contention by arms unconditional ſubmiſſion from them; brethren born of the ſame parents and much reſembling each other; but the younger having a figure even yet the more fierce and more threatning of the two. I mean in the firſt place taxation and binding in all caſes without repreſentation; by which claims I directly underſtand abſolute power. I define my terms nor therefore endeavour to deceive. Yes, (it will be ſaid) abſolute power in the Parliament. It is true; but (I reply) in a Parliament, of which our colonies make no part. How has beſides this word been in former or how will it in future times be different from that of adminiſtration? This firſt demand drove our colonies into what ſome men ſtile rebellion; but by what name (according to the expreſſion of a moſt ancient poet) the Gods call it, I do not pretend to be ſo inſpired or ſo learned, as to ſay.

Such

Such was the doing of the elder: let us next ſee the performances of the other offspring of that worthy family.

I will not carry you very far backward. In the autumn of laſt year however, of one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſeventy-five the Congreſs of the Continent ſent an application to the crown; which bore plain marks of being their laſt. It came for the more formality and weight by the governor of Penſylvania. The contents of it humbly demanded means of accommodation. No anſwer was deigned to be returned. Our miniſters kept the moſt obſtinate ſilence nor would expreſs or hint any terms, on which they would conſent to a reconciliation. Unconditional ſubmiſſion was in all appearance the meaning at the bottom; but which was not a fox to let out of the bag for the public hunt. It ſhewed at times however its head under a claim of the colonies laying down their arms, as the firſt ſtep towards peace and in ſome other ſhapes. A numerous and pompous commiſſion was talked of, but it blew over and vaniſhed. Theſe things made prudent men ſuſpicious and gave a malignant appearance to our American conteſt. The conſequences and the effects of ſuch a conduct could not but be foreſeen: our miniſters however never mended their pace. This writer for one at that time did not ſcruple ſo far to riſque his credit, as freely and publicly to declare in direct terms his opinion that "if the next vernal equinox (then near) did not find us entered into ſome hopeful and probable treaty of accommodation; we ſhould in all appearance never ſee again our late provinces under our dominion*." No ſpirit of prophecy was required to form or to ſignify ſuch a conception. The cauſes appeared clear and the effects could not but

* See a Further Examination of American meaſures, page 237, Dec. 1775.

follow. His words are hitherto true. No treaty was entered into: ſuch mean counſels are deſervedly deſpiſed by men, who (it is to be hoped) know much better what meaſures to purſue. Our colonies however accordingly declared themſelves independent. God grant that this may be the laſt inſtance of any notice or warning of our public miſchiefs in like manner given and in like manner neglected, which ſhall be verified by the event! Thus however did the deſire of unconditional ſubmiſſion compleat what the demand of abſolute power begun.

A commiſſion nevertheleſs is at length given to the two noble brethren commanding in chief our navy and our army on the ſpot, very proper men in all appearance to make war; but whoſe crowns hitherto conſiſt of the laurel, not of the olive. What is then this commiſſion? A continuation of the ſame plan; a power to receive ſubmiſſions and to grant pardons or in words very little different, unconditional ſubmiſſion again, pardon only excepted. Your whole country has with a wonderful unanimity riſen and revolted in defence of what they believe to be their all: it is ſaid that your military force at land amounts to an hundred and fifty thouſand men; but if your colonies will ſubmit to be taxed at Weſtminſter, to be bound in all caſes whatſoever by a legiſlature three thouſand miles diſtant from them; to hold their charters at pleaſure and to other ſuch conſonant conditions; we will not deſtroy your towns with our artillery nor cut your throats with our armies: your lives ſhall be ſpared and only your all ſhall be taken; at leaſt unleſs your ſuperiors ſhall be pleaſed to run you infinitely more in debt than you are able to pay, after the manner of England. If your hundred and fifty thouſand military men will be ſo good humoured as to lay down their arms; they ſhall not be hanged, drawn and quartered for having taken them up; except however it may be thought proper to make ſome examples on that ſubject.

This

This ſeems to be the power and the ſubſtance of the commiſſion. A committee conſiſting of three perſons of the firſt weight and influence on that continent attended our Admiral from the congreſs. The parties came together on proper ground. He conſidered them as private perſons and they looked upon themſelves in their own light. What an admirable opportunity was then for peace and accommodation! They were at that time in much diſtreſs and in danger of more. It is ſaid; that this plan of immediate and unconditional ſubmiſſion accompanied only with pardon was opened in many words and enforced with a multiplicity of profeſſions ſent by our miniſters at home: when accordingly every thing thereupon vaniſhed into the air. One of theſe Americans perſonally well known in this country and by reputation throughout the civilized world is reported to be juſt now arrived at Paris; whither in all appearance he ſet out immediately after the diſcharge of his commiſſion to the congreſs and where it is to be feared; that he will find offers much more to the minds of himſelf and his conſtituents and his errand prove far more effectual, than with our commanders; as we may one day moſt probably perceive by the event. The writer gueſſed but too exactly concerning the abſolute rupture of our provinces from us. The ſun is now again turned towards our half of the globe: will it be worth the while of certain men to lend an ear, if they ſhall be told; that he will according to all likelihood never leave this northern hemiſphere, will not arrive at once more at his ſummer's ſolſtice: before we are plunged into open and avowed hoſtilities with France; unleſs they ſhall inſtantly alter the courſe of their counſels? Thus however have by attempting at abſolute power our miniſters from a ſtate of the utmoſt tranquility firſt raiſed the preſent civil broils in America, then did they by a deſire of unconditional ſubmiſſion increaſe them into independence and now are they by an obſtinate perſeverance in the ſame meaſures

upon the brink of almoſt infallibly adding to the other two this third miſchief of a French war.

What is then this reviſing of acts and inſtructions? The writer deſires, that nothing ſhould to the beſt of his power remain unexplained or unexamined; but it is only a part of the ſame plan or a new, miniſterial manner of expreſſing the old objects. The firſt and preliminary ſtep demanded ſeems to be; that the colonies muſt ſubmit. To whom? Undoubtedly to the adminiſtration, to the authors of all theſe meaſures. That being done, the offenſive acts of parliament and inſtructions to governors are to be reviſed, to be read and reconſidered and ſuch parts are to be altered, as are diſliked. Diſliked by whom, by the Americans? No, ſurely you are not ſo ſimple as to ſee things in that light; by the adminiſtration, by the ſame perſons, thoſe by whom they were contrived, drawn or paſſed. *Riſum teneatis*——But ſuppoſe, they ſhould diſlike none of them, be perfectly well pleaſed and ſatisfied with them all: What then? Aſk them. Suppoſe, that they ſhould ſo heartily approve of them; as to deſire more of the ſame ſort, new and ſtronger: What then? Aſk them again: Do you take me for a cabinet counſellor? I ſay once more then examine this commiſſion on every ſide; ſift it; weigh it; conſider it with your utmoſt care and attention and what will it after all be found to mean either more or leſs than the terms of abſolute power and unconditional ſubmiſſion with an addition only of pardon? Such is the meaſure meant to invite again under our dominion thirteen revolted and exaſperated colonies, formed into ſo many independent republics and united for their common defence under one council, armed from one end to the other, poſſeſſed of a prodigious and very ſtrong territory and above all backed by France and Spain. Oh this poor country, by what wretched ſteps is it led on to its deſtruction!

What

What however is there then material or eſſential wanting in this commiſſion? That is indeed a very extenſive ſubject in its full bounds: I will nevertheleſs endeavour to bring it into a more narrow compaſs by confining myſelf to one ſingle example and by conſidering in that manner a part, as a pattern of the whole. At the beginning of theſe diſturbances when the tea was deſtroyed; the charter of Maſſachuſet's Bay (of the colony whoſe capital is Boſton) was for a terror or a puniſhment reverſed or altered. The province has a council for one part of its legiſlature. The nomination of this body was in particular taken from the houſe of aſſembly choſen by the people and placed in the king. The counſellors are now rendered totally dependent on the crown and the governors appointed by it. It need not be ſaid, that this privilege with all its conſequences was a very great object to theſe people: although one would think, that it ſhould be a mighty ſmall matter among the almoſt infinite prerogatives belonging to the crown of Great Britain. Charters are a right particularly ſacred: thoſe of our colonies are of a conſequence hardly to be conceived. The ſecurity of every charter in America was ſhaken, when this was overturned. It became a common and moſt important cauſe of that whole continent. Men knocked on the head or ſhot through the body will without doubt contradict nothing: that is the ſure means of people being both made quiet and kept ſo; but every one muſt agree, that it is out of queſtion and abſolutely impoſſible to expect, that there ſhould be peace in America with the conſent of parties; that any whole colony ſhould contentedly acquieſce or even a ſingle man willingly lay down his arms from (as it were) one end of that great country to the other without the reſtoration of this charter. That ſeems to be a ſort of *ſine quâ non*, an indiſpenſably neceſſary condition towards ſuch an end. This appears very plain and evident and to want no words for the proving it. I ſay

nevertheleſs ſubſcribing my name to what I ſo ſay; that I fully believe the adminiſtration (I mean the leading and the ruling part of it) never to have publicly declared, never to have privately ſignified ſo as for it to tranſpire, never to have in their own minds entertained (for on that I in ſome meaſure ground the reſt) any ſuch intention, any meaning or deſign of reſtoring this charter, of repealing the act paſſed on the ſubject and returning to the people of Maſſachuſett's Bay that their moſt precious privilege thus wreſted from them: I ſay, not from the moment of the meaſure being carried into execution to the hour; in which this is now writing. The ſtature was at firſt made perpetual and not temporary or to expire of itſelf at an appointed time; as often is and was in ſome acts made on the ſame occaſion the caſe. What has been ſaid may appear a bold word; it may ſtartle and ſtagger ſome even friends of the adminiſtration, who have not obſerved or attended to the train of theſe affairs and whoſe very ſouls are not bought and ſold: it may perhaps have ſome general, equivocal or evaſive anſwers; but I am perſuaded, that it will not be contradicted on any good ground of authority, that no affirmative proof will be produced in oppoſition to the negative opinion here advanced.

I have purpoſely not mixed or perplexed this ſubject with any other: becauſe it ſo appears clearer, plainer and more pointed; becauſe it will perfectly explain what manner of ſpirit our miniſters are of; becauſe it will throw light on many other circumſtances, being itſelf the ſtrongeſt of all; but not becauſe it is ſingle or alone in the conduct of thoſe directing our public concerns. The Quebec act was by our coloniſts looked upon as a very great grievance, on account both of the extent and the form of government given by it to that province. I could ſay the ſame thing, could make (as it were) the like challenge on this ſubject; but I will not nor will I

again

again go over the ſo often beaten ground of taxation or of binding in all caſes whatſoever. Should the point already thrown out be thought worthy of attention, it will no doubt be examined, cleared up and underſtood; it leads to further obſervations of the ſame ſort, which I had rather that others ſhould make for themſelves: the way to them is plain and they will by that means be the more convincing. It is the lot of the beſt and the wiſeſt, but much more of the leaſt and the weakeſt; that we ſhould be liable to error. The writer holds, that it becomes no man to offer to the public an haſty belief or any but his moſt conſiderate conceptions. He truſts, that he is open to conviction on this or on any other ſubject; but outward ſigns may fairly be demanded in proof of the inward intentions of thoſe governing us, as well as of the reſt of mankind; without which any one would on ſuch an occaſion (as well as on numberleſs others) be at liberty to ſay juſt what he pleaſed. So far are we then from having ever condeſcended to due and reaſonable terms of peace; that we have in all appearance as yet not ſo much as perſuaded ourſelves to paſs the firſt ſtep proper for that purpoſe, not conſented to reſtore even the charter of Maſſachuſet's Bay reverſed (I ſay) by ourſelves at the beginning and on the account of this very diſpute.

Will however an accommodation with our colonies of America be then a ſufficient means to keep us from all our evils? The writer is for one far from ſaying ſo. He has long believed; that the change of our repreſentation from a real to a legal or a nominal one has been our undoing and that nothing, but the reſtoring our conſtitution in that reſpect can be an adequate or a ſubſtantial remedy for our miſchiefs. Without this all endeavours at reformation, all ſchemes of œconomy or plans for paying the public debts, all maxims of preſerving ourſelves in peace and of meddling no more in the buſineſs of others, all reſolutions of indulgence towards our provinces

or of eaſe to our own people will be but as ſowing good grain in the ſands of the ſea; however the ſeed may ſpring up for a moment or appear to proſper for a time; the paſſions of ſome prince and the flattery common to almoſt every miniſter ſtrengthened and confirmed by the perpetual obſequiouſneſs of our parliaments will infallibly choak and deſtroy it, before it can come to any maturity or be fit to bear fruit. To talk nevertheleſs or to write now on that topic in its full extent, what would it be better than beating the air? Times muſt exceedingly mend or (from which may heaven moſt graciouſly guard us) become very much worſe in England; before ſuch a return or a proviſion can poſſibly take place. The conception ſeems much to reſemble, that of the New Jeruſalem and may perhaps ſerve for the amuſement of warm imaginations tinged with enthuſiaſm on the ſubject; but in all appearance will perpetually diſappoint the hopes of thoſe, who ſhall ſeriouſly expect or purſue it. The writer for one however will not now enter into that adventure: He will endeavour to ſail nearer the wind and will point his ſmall political bark towards a port lying (as it were) in the ſame latitude, but more likely to be attained at leaſt than the other.

A noble lord (whoſe name ſtamps authority on his plans; but whoſe health is ſaid to render it doubtful, how far his country can look for his future ſervices) left us on his departure from public attendance a very valuable legacy; I mean his propoſal of doubling the members for our counties in the Houſe of Commons. This would add to one branch of our legiſlature a number of perſons at leaſt much intereſted in the welfare of the whole and ſurely it might be hoped in ſome meaſure independent; if men of that character any where now remain in this moſt meanly abject and venal nation. It would deprive no one of the power of voting; but would double it to multitudes: it would prevent the views or ambition

ambition of none; but might forward the desires and advancement of many: it would be greatly for the good of the whole without at all interfering with individuals: the public benefit and private satisfaction would in this case admirably well fall in with each other; without which conjunction it is to be feared, that the former will at this time find it most exceedingly or unsurmountably difficult to make its way. The breath of a minister could not lightly blow away such an establishment; if the parties electing and elected were once in proper possession of it. At the same time that it was by the generality of the representation a protection to the people; it would by the promoting men of the first landed fortunes among us be likewise a security to the crown. I do not deny even the counties themselves to be infected with the general evil of our country; but all is in our present state become a scramble: It is nothing but the old similitude of a shoulder of mutton. The virtuous Roman famous for having to the utmost of his power withstood the division of the public money came and demanded his own part; when others had been mean or foolish enough to resolve upon the measure. I would likewise be by no means understood to say; that this provision will of itself be totally sufficient or effectual. It might have done much; if it had happily taken place at the Revolution, when something of the sort ought undoubtedly to have been introduced and before that the gangrene had got to our very heart. It will however give a greater weight, credit, steadiness, union and connection with the public to one part of our government and may render it one day of most essential service towards restoring the state; when we shall have passed the purgatory in all appearance preparing for us (of whatever nature it may be) and if we shall then be so happy, as to preserve our present constitution; our three different legislative parts, our King, our Lords

and

and our Commons and if the power of corruption ſhall under ſuch circumſtances be by want of the means weakened and abated among us. It is upon the whole perhaps the beſt underſtood propoſition for the public good, which has been made in our times; of all that have had the leaſt likelihood of being carried into execution. What a pity will it be; if ſo excellent an object ſhall be ſuffered to fall to the ground? Let us on the contrary hope; that ſome perſon animated with the ſame public ſpirit (as his lordſhip) and united to him in the like political ſentiments may adopt the idea and one day place it among our ſtatutes; if the good fortune of our country ſhall ever afford him an opportunity of performing for it ſo valuable a piece of ſervice.

Why however do I in this caſe make my application to any other, than to our miniſters themſelves? All men on occaſion no doubt find in their own minds the means of flattering or of excuſing themſelves from the neceſſity of things or from ſome other cauſe: Our preſent governors however cannot within their own breaſts, but be ſenſible; that they have in fact brought many and great miſchiefs on their country. Even ſuch a regulation, this very moderate return may cover or atone for a multitude of errors. It will not loſe our miniſters a ſingle majority. The acceptableneſs of the meaſure will for their time far overbalance any additional independence. The poſt of Mayor in our palace is not yet become hereditary: ſurely it behoves even our rulers themſelves to have ſome regard for their poſterity after them. It is to be doubted; how far the writer may have the honour of being reckoned in their train: he is however confident, that he offers them no evil counſel either for their country or for themſelves in recommending; that they ſhould in preſent ſecure the ſtate of the public by an immediate peace with America and then ſhould paſs the proviſion here ſpoken of, as laying

laying the firſt ſtone in the foundation of its further, future ſafety and welfare.

I would here willingly ſpeak my humble opinion concerning the two propoſitions ſaid to have at the ſame time been thrown out by the noble lord reſpecting the Houſe of Peers and intended for the like great and good purpoſe there *; but *fugit interea*—the writer might ramble too far from his purpoſe. So much however he begs leave to ſay; that as on one hand that noble body are beyond doubt no other than guardians and truſtees for the public, ſo is he ſenſible on the other; that they ſtand in our conſtitution on totally a different ground from the direct repreſentatives of the people. Our anceſtors were of opinion, that an hereditary Nobility in the ſtate compoſing one part of our legiſlature would be for the general benefit of the whole. On this principle our Houſe and ſucceſſion of Peers are eſtabliſhed, a principle the wiſdom or the propriety of which this writer is very far from diſputing: he ſincerely honours and reſpects it in his real ſentiments. Venice and Genoa, directly ariſtocratical ſtates, are two of the moſt flouriſhing parts of Europe within the pale of Popery. Holland and Switzerland rank highly in that reſpect among Proteſtants and much partake of the ſame ſpecies of government. If our own country is at this time in danger of being borne down by an abundant weight of evils; they have come from another quarter. Be theſe things however as they may; the caſe and our claim are exceedingly different with regard to that other and honourable Houſe; whoſe abſolute eſſence it is to repreſent in miniature the whole commons of Great Britain at large and which (I am ſure that) I do by ſuch a deſcription not mean to diſgrace or to degrade. The members of it are immediately nominated and ap-

* Taking away the tranſlation of Biſhops and electing the ſixteen peers of North Britain for life.

pointed

pointed by the people for that particular purpoſe, the eſpecial protectors of our liberties and attornies of our intereſts. I ſay then; that ſhould time alter and mar theſe things, as it muſt all human inſtitutions: it will nevertheleſs remain our native, our inherent and unalterable right to demand by dutiful and conſtitutional; but withal by free, by moſt earneſt and for their weight and number almoſt irreſiſtible petitions; that they ſhould be renewed and reſtored to us again nor can all the J-hnſ-ns, the T-ck-rs, the W-ſl-ys, the M-cph-rſ-ns and a thouſand more ſuch ſay one ſyllable of ſenſe to the contrary; if they will not evade or elude, but fairly look the queſtion in the face. The contamination of this ſource has been the cauſe not only of all our evils in general likely to overwhelm us, but perhaps of this American quarrel in particular. Let us then (I repeat) apply to our miſchiefs of each ſort the right and reſpective remedy, immediate peace to the one; but fit proviſions in the proper places to the other and may heaven and the public bleſs thoſe perſons; who ſhall execute theſe counſels or ſuch as theſe or who ſhall propoſe other better, of whatever party and denomination among us they may be.

I throw out ſuch words the rather; becauſe to paſs by others there is in particular one gentleman, who has diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the late American queſtions and who (when his proofs appear of themſelves not over convincing) ſo continually rants and raves about mock patriots and republican bigots; that it ſeems, as if theſe ſpectres ſometimes haunted him in his ſleep*. I don't well underſtand, what any one means by objecting to good meaſures under the pretence of their being in the world bad men. There is a ſet of people, who perpetually abuſe every thing in the ſhape of patriotiſm; not at the bottom becauſe perſons of that deſcription do but too

* See Addreſs and Appeal and Series of Anſwers.

often

often betray their own principles, when they are in power; but becauſe they maintain the liberty of the public, when they are out of it. Let us then not trouble ouſelves about parties; but directly ſeek the common good of the whole. Let us eſtabliſh ſuch a ſyſtem; as may at once both reſtrain evil miniſters and diſappoint falſe patriots. Let us reſolve on proviſions; which will naturally induce or neceſſarily force every man to be true and faithful to the truſt undertaken by him for the community. Let us ſet our faces againſt corruption, that accurſed canker; which infects and conſumes our land from one end to the other. Theſe things ſurely may to a degree at leaſt be done, not however by ultimately bringing all to the ſingle will of one perhaps ignorant, obſtinate or otherwiſe unqualified perſon; but by giving to the public ſome part in the care of its own affairs; whoſe buſineſs they properly are, which is moſt concerned to ſee them duly conducted and that can have no intereſt againſt itſelf. This I ſay in general; but on the preſent occaſion in particular, ought we not in prudence (as every reaſonable man does, whoſe houſe is in flames) to concur and cooperate with thoſe; who deſire and endeavour to quench the fire; to quench it (I mean) in this caſe not with blood, but to put an end to it by peace and reconciliation?

I do for one not pretend to pin my faith on the ſleeves of politicians: ſo far however as the public may be concerned in the queſtion, let us preſume to aſk: who they are, whom we may judge this gentleman to compliment with his courteous appellation of mock patriots; but that the writer muſt rather hope and believe to have at preſent the common cauſe of our country in their hands. Have they not poſſeſſed the firſt poſts and offices of the ſtate? Could they undoubtedly not have held them on the ſame terms, as others have ſince done? Have they not

not evidently relinquiſhed them in conformity to their opinion of the public good; becauſe they would not give their conſent and concurrence to meaſures in which their hearts and their ſentiments muſt not have gone along with their actions and their language? I know; how fond ſome people are to find any quirk or quibble on this ſubject: even party or ſelf-intereſt itſelf however cannot anſwer theſe points, but in favour of thoſe towards whom I am now taking the liberty to turn my diſcourſe. I am not making panegyricks: I will ſay no more of theſe reſpectable perſons, than belongs to my purpoſe. I will likewiſe not enquire into any other merits or recommendations of their ſucceſſors; but ſure I am, that they are not remarkable for being lucky in politics. Our American war is the rock on which we are running with all our ſails ſet; where the public ſhip is in inſtant danger of daſhing and of breaking into a thouſand pieces; where we riſque being wrecked almoſt before we ſleep. Is then the nation ſo forlorn, that men could not without difficulty be found; who would willingly and readily relieve us in that reſpect? So ſhould we however obtain time and with it hope, which in the affairs of men futurity is ſaid ever to afford.

But how could peace proceed from the ſide here ſpoken of? Is not the celebrated declaratory Act ſaid to have originally come from ſome of that quarter? It may be ſo: it was no doubt at firſt however intended only for a dead letter, to ſatisfy ſome at home and not to offend others abroad. It accordingly produced its effect with our colonies, the parties chiefly concerned; who never more troubled themſelves upon the ſubject, until ſome people drew this ſword out of the ſcabbard and have in their madneſs ſo dealt it about, that it has already deluged with blood North America and not a little threatens to produce the like ſcene in Great Britain. Theſe men beyond queſtion meant at the bottom to tax that country,

country, to try the experiment and to puſh it to the extremity; which they are now about. If they had not found the declaratory Act and the duty on tea ready to their hands: it cannot be doubted, but they would have paſſed what they had pleaſed for the purpoſe. I do not mean that this Act ought not to be revoked: ſurely it ſhould having by whoſeſoever means made ſo much miſchief. The writer has ſaid theſe things only for the ſake of truth and that in this moſt difficult criſis of our country all men wiſhing well to it may be united. He has no perſonal concern in the ſubject. He is neither of Paul nor of Apollos nor of Cephas; but (if it may be permitted him to parody thoſe holy words) he only preaches the good and the ſafety of the public; which he muſt believe exceedingly to depend upon a ſpeedy peace with America.

Having ſaid ſo much about mock-patriots I would not neglect to add ſome words concerning republican-bigots; whom I ſuppoſe to be different perſons from the others and not to be looked for among Chancellors, Treaſurers and Secretaries. I gueſs theſe to mean ſome of the firſt writers of our times in philoſophy, morality and politics. The writer will not preſume to make any compariſon between them and the gentleman, from whom the reflection falls; but he is for one ready to acknowledge himſelf hardly worthy to kiſs the hem of their garments. They have their pens and ink in their hands: he will leave them to their own defence. He has himſelf however been always accuſtomed to converſe freely; but he cannot recollect ever to have heard even one ſingle perſon expreſs a deſire, that any ſteps ſhould be taken towards ſetting up in England (what is called) a republic or to have ſignified, that he believed ſuch a ſcheme to be in our time practicable or poſſible. If any thing of this kind has in his preſence happened; it muſt have been ſo ſlight as to ſlip

out

out of his remembrance. He moves in an humbler ſphere, than to be honoured with any of theſe high names: he attributes no ſuch titles to himſelf nor does he ſeem to come within the gentleman's deſcription; having declared himſelf rather for a ſeparation from America, than a continuation of the preſent moſt ruinous war: whereas the gentleman makes it a great point (and as it were) a characteriſtic of his republican bigot; that he is by all means for keeping Great Britain and that country together. The prayer of the writer has ever been (according to what we are well taught) for peace in our times: this coincides with his conception of the public good: it ſuits his ſituation, his temper and his time of day; but if the madneſs of any ſet of men ſhould nevertheleſs fling all things into confuſion; if we are to have nothing, but what chance and the fortuitous concourſe of atoms ſhall produce out of their chaos; his choice is not now to make between an elective and an abſolute government. It is no doubt free for him to aver; that he ſhould on ſuch an occaſion place in his wiſhes and his opinion a real repreſentation of the people only, before an hereditary Ariſtocracy and either of them very far before a ſimple monarchy. It is not many centuries, that there have been in England two legiſlative Houſes. There was a time when our Lords and Commons ſat together and were blended in one body. The writer preſumes, that it is perfectly lawful to ſay; that he ſhould infinitely prefer ſuch a conſtitution, a government conſiſting of hereditary Peers and elected Commoners united, voting and acting together in the ſame chamber and compoſing the ſame ſenate even without a prince, I ſay ſhould very far prefer it to the being ruled by the will of one perſon, whether immediately ſignified by his ſign manual or through the formal intervention of a few bought and corrupted men. It is however to be hoped, that we ſhall be put to no ſuch experience; but that certain perſons will content themſelves with

with having given birth to thirteen Commonwealths in America and not aſſimilate Great Britain to them; if they cannot or ſhall not bring them back to Great Britain. The writer will here venture ſo far out of his way, as to ſay; he cannot but wonder, that ſome of the American colonies ſhould appoint or propoſe intricate and perplexed forms of government * inſtead of one plain, ſimple repreſentative of the people equally choſen and comprehending both the legiſlative and the executive power and which of courſe might on occaſion act by committees or parts of itſelf. As there can be no ſimpler, ſo in all appearance neither can there be any better democratical form of government, than that; if there can at all be any ſuch for a large or diſperſed people, who are under the neceſſity of framing for themſelves an entirely new conſtitution. Some people ſeem by Republicaniſm only to mean a regard to the public and a love of our country; but he muſt be among the meaneſt of men, who ſhall in that ſenſe ſcruple to bear ſo honourable an appellation during his life or to have it inſcribed on his tomb-ſtone after his deceaſe. It muſt ſurely be the good of the public; which is the guide at leaſt in all political meaſures and morality.

Here then I take my leave of theſe republican bigots; but to ſhew how much this gentleman ſometimes ſhoots his bolts at random I muſt mention; that in his book before he mightily talks about penſioners of France and repeats the ſame in his laſt. He ſays, that theſe penſioners of France will † declaim bitterly againſt our parting with North America; for that is the ground, on which he introduces all theſe different characters into his drama. Now what a moſt ſtrange extravagance this is? Let any one aſk himſelf the queſtion; whether of the

* See the plan of government propoſed for Penſylvania, that of the Delawar State, &c.

† See Series of Anſwers, page 85, and Addreſs and Appeal, page 11.

two France would rather buy, an union or a ſeparation between Great Britain and her Colonies and which ſhe would command her dependants or her emiſſaries to promote? Sure I am; that I ſhall not ſpend my breath on ſuch a ſubject nor is that the particular obſervation I meant to make; but I deſire it to be conſidered, on whom have in our time fallen the ſuſpicion and the charge of touching French money and of ſelling our country and of betraying our counſels to the court of France. I ſay no more on that matter: but had I the honour to be of this gentleman's cabinet; I ſhould, as a critic, counſel him another time to keep off from that topic.

This gentleman has made a round declaration of his own independance for the time to come. I do for one credit him upon it; but ſince the political propoſitions advanced by him are to be underſtood, as his ſincere and genuine ſentiments; I muſt need ſay, that ſome of them are both in themſelves moſt ſtrange and in their experiment moſt dangerous to the Public. Whoever directly or indirectly and in any ſhape ſpurred or encouraged our miniſters to the preſent meaſures againſt America, has already very great and will in all appearance have many more and extreme miſchiefs to anſwer for; before the whole cataſtrophe ſhall be cloſed: he will bid fair to find reaſon for a ſevere repentance; if at times he ever impartially examines his own breaſt and has the leaſt feeling of the evils either of mankind, his country or perhaps even of himſelf. I will ſay to this gentleman only one thing more. He greatly complains of the treatment given him by his antagoniſts; but his own dictionary does exceedingly abound in hard words, which well know their way into his writings. I will not repeat, what has formerly been obſerved*: he may perhaps be

* See Further Examination, page 175.

mending

mending on that head. Whereas in his publication before the laſt within the compaſs of four ſhort lines he flings on ſome perſons differing from him ſeveral of the fouleſt terms in our language; in this latter he only tells them with a little circumlocution, that the beſt of them pay no regard to truth or decency*. He can conſtrue *Qui dicit, quod vult; quod non vult, audiet.* Every man has a right to receive in return ſome of the ſame kind of compliments, as he is himſelf pleaſed to beſtow upon others. If the writer ſhall ſeem to have remained long on any of theſe ſubjects; his excuſe muſt be beſides their importance or propriety on the occaſion; that the book of this gentleman having lately been in his hands, ſome of it could not well fail ſticking to his fingers.

I have now conſidered the probability of a French and a Spaniſh war and have endeavoured to point out the proper means of avoiding them: I have examined the meaſures and the American commiſſion of our miniſters and believe myſelf to have, but too plainly proved; that theſe are immediately running upon the very rock before mentioned: I have likewiſe preſumed to follow at a diſtance the footſteps of a great ſtateſman and have repeated a plan for the reſtoring in ſome ſmall meaſure our moſt excellent, but now almoſt loſt conſtitution; I beg nevertheleſs liberty to ſay ſomething upon one or two more points, before I turn my back upon my ſubject. The conduct of France being in diſcourſe and her hand appearing beyond a poſſibility of doubt or contradiction every day more plain, I deſire in the firſt place to diſcuſs a particular charge often much urged againſt the Americans; which has a connection with that circumſtance. It is uſed to be ſaid; that they continued dutiful and obedient, while they were apprehenſive of their French neighbours; but that we having conquered

* See Series of Anſwers, page 98.

for them Canada and Louiſiana and thereby removed that fear, they then thought; that they might riſe and rebel and ſet up their before projected republics at their pleaſure. This is the conception; which has been preſſed upon them, as a home thruſt and an accuſation, of which they cannot get clear. You know, what were my ſentiments concerning the American cauſe; that being in the beginning grounded in juſtice it has its head in heaven and its root in the foundations of the world nor can by every trifling ſuggeſtion therefore be ſhaken or overthrown. The writer is however earneſtly deſirous to remove every the ſmalleſt obſtacle towards peace or the ſlighteſt pretence for ill blood: he is perfectly perſuaded, that the Americans may put their whole diſpute on this point itſelf and take upon them to prove; that the very circumſtance here alledged muſt inſtead of aſſiſting operate againſt and to the diſadvantage of their revolt. I ſay then; that France is their preſent ſupport; they are there received, protected, ſupplied and encouraged: ſhe is (as it were) their ſheet anchor in this their diſtreſſed condition: theſe words have but too much meaning. If Canada were now French, would not then the caſe be there likewiſe the ſame or would New France refuſe to follow the example of the old? Would not the Provincials have behind them faſt friends; where they might on occaſion find refuge, ſhelter, reſources and aſſiſtance? How would you have prevented them from being plentifully ſupplied with gunpowder, cannon, mortars, muſkets, cloathing and every other neceſſary or convenience (ſome of which are now perhaps ſufficiently wanted by them) when the French freely carried thither all ſuch things and then without difficulty diſpoſed of, ſold or gave them to theſe their neighbours of that continent? Would you have forbidden France to furniſh with thoſe articles her own forts and garriſons; have reſtrained her trade with

with her own ſettlements or have ſearched her men of war and her merchant ſhips in their paſſage to Quebec? How eaſily would their engineers or other officers and perhaps thoſe of ſome more nations beſides have found their way from Canada to our Colonies? What is now the caſe in that country? Is there not a moſt dangerous enemy coming on the backs of the Americans; while our fleet and our other army are attacking them in their front? There is however no end of theſe queſtions; but would it be as readily and as roundly anſwered or could there be found no grounds for ſuch a ſuſpicion in the Quebec act itſelf; if any one ſhould advance, that the poſſeſſion of the French provinces had on the contrary encouraged certain other perſons in their projects againſt ours? I leave nevertheleſs that ſubject to itſelf. Let us next turn our eyes towards the Spaniards. Would not they be acting the ſame part at Auguſtine and in Florida, as they are at the Havannah and in old Spain; if that place and that country now continued with them? France and Spain are one. More words will not make this matter clearer: what a moſt ſtrange argument is the contrary? It was nevertheleſs one of the beſt among thoſe of ſome people and how long and how eaſily did it paſs? Time and the fact now plainly diſprove it. The caſe is perhaps much the ſame with reſpect to ſome other points; if they were at preſent to my purpoſe. Political diſputants are not apt to acknowledge their groundleſs charges; but this certainly can never more be maintained, unleſs modeſty is baniſhed from among men, as has long been ſaid concerning juſtice. It was evidently then not the removal of the French and the Spaniards from that country, which induced our Americans to their preſent proceedings; but it is to be wiſhed, that ſome men would look a little into their own conduct and conſider; whether it is difficult to find there another much ſurer ſource and cauſe of theſe unfortunate events.

It is often affirmed experience to have already proved the little value, of which our North American provinces ever were to us; for where is the want of money, the decay of commerce, the diſtreſſes and the difficulties with which we have been threatened on their defection? I anſwer in the firſt place then; that the war itſelf creates a great trade and probably a very beneficial one too; if contractors would tell their ſecrets, which however will hardly happen, until thoſe of all hearts ſhall be explained and opened. I have now in my hands an account of the extraordinaries of the army extracted from the papers laid before the Houſe of Commons. There are in it above twenty-one thouſand pounds for cabbage, for ſour crout, ſalted cabbage ſent to Boſton: there are to a Privy-counſellor and his partner (beſides other articles to the firſt) above four hundred thouſand pounds for the ſervice of the forces in North America. You will not expect of me to be exceedingly particular: our public accounts are drawn in the true ſtile of writing: they contain much matter in a very ſmall compaſs and very little language: they are ſhort and ſweet, *multum in parvo*, like the Iliad in a nut-ſhell. What number of words is it imagined; that there go to a bargain of that magnitude between a firſt miniſter and his friend, whom he has a mind to ſerve? Whether ſo many, as between two jockeys about the ſale of a horſe in Smithfield? Why may not an hundred thouſand pounds be gotten upon a ſingle agreement of this kind or more money and what check is there in the caſe, except the inclination of the miniſter on one hand and the moderation of the contractor himſelf on the other? Suppoſe the ſame perſon was to vote the war in Council, in Parliament and in other material places beſides. I am moſt happy with reſpect to the example before my eyes; that it refers to one, upon whom the leaſt poſſible ſuſpicion cannot fall

of

of any unfit influence from ſuch a motive. I write the more freely for that reaſon; but it need not be ſaid, that this cannot always be the caſe: the argument is general. Be theſe things however as they may; millions borrowed and expended in this manner operate for the preſent much, as if they were brought in by the balance of trade. They are diſperſed and make a plenitude in the public alike. The contractor himſelf may be too cautious or too prudent to ſpend his profits; but he places them with other people and they become part in the common ſtock of currency, before the chain is at an end. The leſs the public receives in return or in plain Engliſh the bigger the job; the more the immediate eaſe: the price is in that caſe paid and diſtributed, but the correſpondent commodities nevertheleſs remain for any other market or purpoſe. A private prodigal never wallows in more affluence; than while he is from all quarters taking up money on bonds, annuities and mortgages. The caſe is the ſame with a public body from a kingdom to a commiſſion of turnpike. If borrowing could but continue for ever; he only would be a bad œconomiſt, who was ſo imprudent as to live within the income of his fortunes. When that practice ſtops or the time of payment comes; it is then that the party, whether a government, a country gentleman or a ſhopkeeper on Ludgate-hill appears to be broken or bankrupt. What can be more abſurd than to talk about the want of money in a nation; whoſe miniſter is at that inſtant putting his hands into the pockets of the whole world, freely drawing it from thence and laviſhly dealing it out firſt to his own creatures and dependants and then through them to all the reſt of the country? There is in this caſe likewiſe another conſideration. Should any where our manufactures fail or our common people find it difficult to ſubſiſt; the navy and the army are ready not only with prodi-

prodigious premiums to receive, but almoſt with violence to ſeize upon all who come in their way. They may in America then be fed by the public or live by plunder or lie in the bed of honour. Some of theſe three things neceſſarily muſt and all in their turn not improbably may happen to them; but any one of them will be ſufficient to prevent their demands and their complaints at home. Who can ſay, that a man having his brains beat out beyond the Atlantic died or was ſtarved for want of bread in Great Britain? The moſt likely to be mutinous or clamorous being happily thus diſpoſed of, the reſt may the better pine in ſilence and in ſubmiſſion. There are other plain appearances: I will not enter into them: our eyes are ſtrongly cloſed; although it is to be hoped not unto death. Thus does however the war by a certain round (as it were) keep up the ball and ſupply in ſome ſenſe its own wants. Borrowing and funding make a fullneſs of money throughout the nation, enliſting and preſſing cover the diſtreſſes of individuals; but it is impoſſible not to obſerve, that they all unite to inſure our undoing.

I am coming towards my concluſion: I ſhall detain but little longer you or the public: I would before the taking my laſt leave however willingly ſay a few words to our military men. They are ſometimes ſuppoſed ticklish people to talk to; but I ſhall on one hand endeavour to avoid offence and they will on the other certainly allow me liberty of ſpeech. The writer does not readily comprehend; how a commiſſion ſhould cancel or reduce within the ſingle obligation of obedience to ſome particular perſon all the duties of morality or that the colour of any one's coat may exempt him from the rules common to the reſt of mankind. What can ſanctify ingratitude, injuſtice, rapine, murder or devaſtation? There is an eſſential and an unalterable difference between pleaſure and pain, happineſs and miſery: no one is ſo deprived

deprived of underſtanding as not to perceive or ſo void of modeſty as to deny it. This neceſſarily ſtamps the reſpective character of right and wrong upon human actions; accordingly as they contribute to the one or the other of theſe two objects. The will of a Prince and the orders of a General cannot over-bear or over-rule nor the beating of drums and the ſounding of trumpets drown or deſtroy theſe things. If an officer and his corps offend without cauſe any perſon in Britain; they are amenable before twelve men and to the laws of the land. Can then Good and Evil ever be left behind in our iſland or be ſunk upon their paſſage in the great Atlantic ocean? Are they only the invention of national lawgivers or do they firſt ſubſiſt in the nature of things themſelves and theſe only preſcribe the modes of proceeding, the rewards and the puniſhments reſpecting them? Am I then (cries the ſoldier) obliged to conſult Suarez, Grotius or Sanderſon; before I draw my ſword or fire my muſket? I anſwer that no ſuch idea is entertained. It muſt be vain to diſcourſe with any one, who is in a downright ſtate of force or of ſervitude; but I will tell a ſoldier or any man at all maſter of himſelf what he is obliged not only to conſult, but to obey and to purſue beſides: I mean, his own ſincere, inward ſentiments and opinion. Such is the conſtant condition of humanity and who are they; that pretend to plead a privilege in this reſpect above all others of their ſpecies? No one from the biſhop ſetting upon a legiſlative bench to the meaneſt officer in a marching regiment is entitled or warranted to put his ſenſe and conſciouſneſs of things into the pocket of a miniſter and to act himſelf, as if he had none. Theſe could ſometimes perhaps not eaſily be in a worſe place. Do you mean then to impeach the profeſſion of Arms? On the contrary I highly honour it: the writer reſpects it; as the protection of the innocent, the ſupport of the helpleſs and the defence of our country.

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Let thoſe anſwer that queſtion; who would debaſe it to far different purpoſes: it may behove ſome other people to beware; leſt by reſoving to palliate every particular action, they throw difficulties upon the profeſſion itſelf in general. Here however ſays ſome one animated with an ardour for the ſervice and the field: give me then victory, glory and advancement and do you preach your ſermons to monks and to hermits. I preſume this to be the true point and iſſue of the ſubject. The writer will in return therefore be likewiſe bold to reply, although without any particular application; that there is a courſe of things, which a leader at the head of forty or fifty thouſand men cannot command; but which ſooner or later and by ſome means or other ſeldom fails to humble the moſt proud and the moſt powerful or to make the ſtrongeſt and the ſtouteſt to feel, who deſpiſe or oppoſe it. My moral I do not mean to explain; but the principle obtains throughout all the parts of our globe.

Here then my journey is ended. If the writer ſhall in any place appear to have expreſſed himſelf with a greater degree of freedom than may be welcome to ſome men, it deſerves to be conſidered: how juſt a diſpleaſure or provocation it is for any one perfectly ſatisfied in his humble ſituation to ſee every thing about him, his country and his private affairs in danger of being totally confounded and diſtracted by the means and the meaſures of thoſe very perſons; whoſe particular province and duty it is to preſerve the public from all miſchiefs. Our preſent condition very widely differs from that of our anceſtors at the period of the Revolution. We had then no national debt, hardly one of a ſingle ſhilling. Our country abounded with men and money. Government was in its vigour. An inconſiderate meaſure in politics might be purſued almoſt with impunity. Theſe things are now totally altered. We are by a gradual progreſs

at length come to the brink of a precipice. We muſt ſtay our ſteps or we go headlong. Our fate much depends upon a few months or days. Let us then not become parties in the diſpute between Spain and Portugal. Let us keep a watchful eye over France for the purpoſe not of entering into contention, but of preſerving peace. Let us above all accommodate ourſelves with our colonies. Let us eſtabliſh ſuch proviſions, as may at the ſame time both check corruption and diſappoint ambition. Let us employ our navies and our armies for the defence and not the deſtruction of ourſelves. Let us without diſtinction unite for the ſaving of our country; which does in this moſt difficult criſis, but too much want the concurrence and the aſſiſtance of every honeſt man.

December, 1776.

FINIS.

A R Smith Sept 15 1879 X A S

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